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HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE SUPPORT, S.B. # 280 LONG TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN'S NOTICE TO NURSING HOME RESIDENTS MARCH 3, 2016

My name is Kevin Brophy, and I am the Director of Elder Law for Connecticut Legal Services, a non-profit legal aid agency. My testimony is submitted on behalf of the Connecticut Legal Aid programs, my low income elderly clients, and the many low income elderly residents of CT.

If a nursing home intends to close, it is required to notify the residents in advance. The notice must contain some specific information, including the right of residents to appeal any involuntary discharge and that the Department of Social Services is the decision maker as to whether the facility may close or not. Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17b-352.

We strongly support S.B. # 280, An Act Concerning the Long-Term Care Ombudsman's Notice to Nursing Home Residents, which amends Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17b-352. It requires the facility's notice of intent to close be accompanied by a jointly issued informational letter issued from the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman and the State Department on Aging. The letter would provide information on services available to residents related to the facilities' intent to close.

Nursing home residents are frail and many need medical supervision around the clock. The nursing home is their home, where some have lived for several years. The residents often develop strong relationships with the staff and other residents at the facility. So, residents and their families are extremely frightened and worried, if they receive a notice from a facility that they are attempting to close.

The Long Term Care Ombudsman represents the interests of nursing home residents. See Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17a-408. It is important that nursing home residents have an advocate in their corner. When a facility decides it wants to close, it is critical that residents and their families be told as soon as possible about the Long Term Care Ombudsman Office and their services. The residents should not depend solely on information from the facility. The resident's interests are not the same as the facility's interest.

It is smart public policy to approve S.B. 280. Please support it.

Thank you.



